

FRENCH INDO-CHINA

seriously compromised. Khmer love of justice is renowned, and those famed for their equitable judgments are particularly venerated.

Possibly this is due to the religio-philosophic origin of Cambodian law which is firmly rooted in Brahmoism and Buddhism, although there is a marked Chinese influence as well. In fact the codes are collections of royal edicts perpetually revised and reorganized by a medley of kings, bonzes, mandarins, and astrologers. The last of the important native revisions occurred in 1870 when a committee of lawyers submitted their work for approval to the king and an assembly of high dignitaries.

The confusion in the codes' organization, just like its repetitious and sententious character, well reflect the Cambodian mentality. A synthesis is very difficult to make because its general ideas are drowned in a of detail. The books into which the codes are divided begin by describing the creation of the world, the knowledge of good and evil, the of Manu, the qualities required of judges for the nine Hells and the slightly less numerous Heavens. Then follow etiquette rules for royal ceremonies^ the privileges of religious bodies, the duties of the king's wives and councillors—all personally dictated by Buddha. There is a special emphasis on the qualities needed by those who govern.

On the surface Khmer laws are certainly barbarous. There are twenty-one ways of inflicting slow death. There is an eye-for-an-eye quality to -all primitives, and ferocious penalties quite inappropriate to Ae apathetic Khmers, It was Buddhism that tipped Ac on the side of mercy, and tempered in practice the primitive of the kw, especially in regard to slavery. Chinese influence » seen in the penalty of caning, and by the collective

responsibility
 of the and of the guilty person. As in all
 Oriental kw
 are gape from the Occidental viewpoint
 notably, a vague*
 ownership* *dml*^ and the relations between
 individuals,
 must fill in. The Khmer kw, like its Am»-
 HHte is a penal code, and civil kws are
to statutes relative to loans,
 debts, and
 An agricultural people, their
 legislation never
 * for example, as bankruptcy,
 before the is a striking feature of
 Cambodian as well
 is of Guilt and punishment are
 apportioned to
 the of done rather than to the guilty intent,
 and by the
 of the Injured parties. For example* it
 is to a woaaan than a wicbw or
 a
m it *pwfA* by